

**Child Support Enforcement
Task Force
November 8, 2005**

Members present: Mike Schwindt, James Fleming, Keith Berger, Vince Gillette, Wendy Jacobson, Joe Belford, Darrell Vanyo, Scott Griffeth, Robert Freed, Bernice Delorme, Brad Davis, John Waller, Lisa Kemmet, Terry Traynor, Sen. Tom Fischer, Rep. William Devlin, and Ron Anderson.

Also present: Paul Kramer (DHS Fiscal Administration)

Members absent: Dan Richter and Sally Holewa (Mike Sandal observed in her place)

Schwindt welcomed the group to the second meeting of the Task Force.

A revised agenda was disseminated. Schwindt asked if there were any changes needed to the agenda. None were noted.

Schwindt reminded the group of the BECEP fund-raiser lunch.

Since there were a few new faces, introductions were made. In addition to the members present, the following observers were present: Kathy Ziegelmann and Brenda Krueger of the Fargo Regional Child Support Enforcement office; and Diane Hausmann of the Grand Forks Regional Child Support Enforcement office.

Review of minutes The draft minutes of the September 8, 2005, Task Force meeting were previously sent. Schwindt mentioned that these minutes were also recently posted on the Child Support Enforcement Web site. He asked if there were any corrections or additions needed to the draft minutes. None were noted. Belford moved for approval of the minutes and Griffeth seconded. Voice vote: all in favor. Minutes approved.

Unavailable days A calendar of unavailable days for Task Force members was previously sent. Schwindt said that this will be used as a planning document for scheduling the next Task Force meeting. Belford mentioned that he will be in Winnipeg January 11 – 13, 2006. Sen. Fischer said that he will have other dates unavailable as things get scheduled. Delorme said she will be unavailable on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Response to questions from last meeting presentation Schwindt asked if there were questions on anything covered last meeting, or if there were any clarifications needed.

Traynor asked if Schwindt could comment on the role of the Task Force. Issues discussed have included centralization projects, structural changes, incentive

distribution formula, etc. Is it the Task Force's role to make recommendations to the Department of Human Services (DHS) or does the Task Force make the actual decisions on these things? In response, Schwindt handed out a document entitled "Child Support Enforcement Task Force" and asked that Fleming review the information. The Task Force's findings and recommendations, together with any legislation required to implement the recommendations, must be presented by DHS to the next legislative assembly. This comes from SB 2301. The Task Force is a study group. The Task Force's charge is to study the structure of the child support enforcement program to determine how to enhance service delivery, improve performance, and increase efficiencies. The study must consider the impact on customers, the effect on Indian counties, and the fiscal effect on counties and the state.

Update Schwindt said that one of the things that was to be done in SB 2301 was a **salary and fringe benefit survey**. DHS' Human Resource division is gathering information from the regional offices. This information is summarized in a previously mailed benefit comparison document. There are still some changes needed to the document, for example, Cass County now offers dental insurance. Human Resources has also been asked to gather updated **job descriptions**, which are due December 15, 2005.

After all of the information is gathered, there should be a pretty good understanding of benefits and classifications among the regional offices. Last legislative session, there was a whole series of questions regarding Human Resource issues, so hopefully this study will address much of it. Updated information can be made available at the next Task Force meeting.

Griffeth asked about staff moving from county to state. Fischer mentioned that a spreadsheet with comparisons would be helpful. Berger said that he think that the benefits are pretty much the same among the regional offices, but the salaries are quite varied. In response to a question from Delorme, Fleming said that he thinks there were "hold harmless" provisions in the 2005 state administration legislation. He gave an example of getting credit for years of service. Schwindt said that there were also some staff that were paid over what the anticipated state salary range would be. Schwindt said that the information would be pulled together and it would hopefully be available at the next meeting. Devlin said he recalled one issue from last session that had to do with carry-over of accumulated annual leave and sick leave. Devlin said we will need to be sure to cover that area. In response to a question from Delorme, Schwindt said that caseworkers do not all have the same caseload. For example, the variance is from 410 cases per worker to 1,000 cases per worker. However, it is also calculated differently. For example, the Fargo regional office has a bigger caseload so they can do some things with specialization, etc. He said that the Devils Lake and Bismarck offices have the most tribal cases.

Schwindt said he was pleased to find out that Three Affiliated Tribes has just been approved for direct federal funding to start their own child support enforcement program.

The start-up funding lasts two years. In response to a question from Traynor, Schwindt said he was not sure of the effective date. He said that usually effective dates are at the beginning of the quarter (e.g., October 1, 2005), but doesn't know for sure. Further notification should be received any day now.

Draft incentive distribution rule Members were previously sent a copy of a draft administrative rule regarding incentive payments. Fleming reviewed parts of the draft rule. He also asked that members refer to the statutory authority behind the rule, found in Tab 3 of their binders. Section 2 of SB 2301 states that DHS shall distribute child support incentive funds according to a formula that promotes performance and consistency in child support enforcement activities throughout the state. This became effective as to incentives distributed after July 1, 2005.

Fleming then provided a brief recap from the last meeting. There are various places that the incentives go. For illustration purposes, if there are \$100 of incentives, \$5 goes to the improvement fund. The remaining \$95 is split 75% to the counties and 25% to the state. This 75%/25% split is addressed in subsection one of the draft rule.

Subsection two of the draft rule proposes what would happen with the 75% that is payable to the counties - 80% would be distributed strictly under the federal performance measure method and 20% would be set aside for distribution based on performance targets, which will be explained later. If a regional office meets its target, the office will get its full incentive money. If the regional office does not meet its target, the "unearned" incentives will be set aside. The use of those unearned incentives is one of things to be determined in the rule.

Fleming said that Schwindt had previously talked about Wisconsin's method of distributing incentives to the counties. Subsection 3 of the draft rule would address that. The setting of targets would promote improved performance. It would also provide extra allowances for larger regions.

Subsection four of the draft rule assumes an amount otherwise payable to the regional offices. DHS may retain up to 20% of the amounts payable, in increments of 5%, if DHS determines that people do not receive a level of service from the regional office that is substantially similar to the level of service provided by other regional offices to similarly situated people. This addresses the required consistency provision. Prior to retaining funds, DHS would notify the regional office of the finding of inconsistency and issue a directive indicating the steps that need to be taken to resolve the inconsistency. If the regional office complies with the directive, the regional office will receive the funds. This must be done within 30 days, but a longer period is authorized if needed. The funds would not be distributed to the regional office if the regional office does not comply with the directive within the time period. There is flexibility as to what should be done with the unearned incentives. Input from the Task Force on that may be particularly helpful. Fleming reminded members that incentives need to be used to supplement, not supplant, the program's budget. The 5% set-aside of county money for

special projects was in Schwindt's budget instructions. Fleming said the group can come back to the draft rule, and the letter from Larry Bernhardt, in a few minutes. But, first, Kramer will go through some information on spreadsheets.

Kramer reviewed information as to how implementation of the draft rule would look like in practice. He mentioned that the prior years' data is used. What did regional offices do compared to what they were supposed to do? If the regional office showed no performance improvement, the office would not get the incentives. If that were the case, there would then be unearned incentives. Another option considered was using unearned incentives for high performance. The bonus would basically be used to "make the office whole." This would work as long as there are some regional offices that fall below their targets.

In response to a question from Gillette, Kramer said that, although FFY 2005 data has recently become available, the information is based on prior years' performance measure data for consistency with information previously presented.

There was some discussion about the fact that only four of the five performance measures are considered in the proposed incentive distribution formula. The cost/benefit measure is not included. Davis has attempted to address that measure as well in some of the work he has done. As to why it wasn't included in the proposed formula, Kramer said that it really doesn't fit in with the others, as it relates to combining all five into one.

Kramer explained that two points per measure was used to come up with improvement targets. An improvement target of eight is used for six regional offices, and an improvement target of 12 is used for the largest two regional offices (Bismarck and Fargo). This higher target is done because those offices have a greater impact on the incentives.

In response to a question from Vanyo about where the target of 12 came from, Kramer said it came from Wisconsin's formula. Fleming added that the improvement targets themselves were not in the draft rule. They may be changed as needed. In response to a questions from Griffith about who would establish the targets, Fleming said that DHS would, with input from the regional offices. He sees that it would be a collaborative effort between the state and the regional offices. Kramer clarified it is all in one "pool" – not two for each measure, but rather eight total. In response to a comment from Freed, Schwindt said the option of setting aside the unearned incentives and making them available to the regional office at a later date could be considered.

There was some discussion about setting targets on each of the performance measures. Schwindt said that consideration would need to be given for each of the measures; he sees nothing to be gained to set up for failure. For example, he said he is comfortable with the current paternity establishment percentage (PEP) but was not at all

comfortable with the current cases paying on arrears percentage. Sen. Fischer said that he felt the targets need to be set considering factors that affect the regional offices. In response to question from Vanyo, Schwindt said that the cost/benefit measure was not included because it just doesn't fit right with the others. In response to a follow-up question from Vanyo, Schwindt confirmed that cost/benefit was one of the federal measures. Fleming reminded the members that the cost/benefit measure would be included in the 80% incentive distribution.

Waller asked what exactly would be the process of getting input from the regional offices regarding the targets. Would there be, for example, documented negotiations? Schwindt said that, in the past, he has asked each regional office to submit a plan as to how the regional office would move from the bottom half of performance to the top half. He said that didn't work very well. So, he then asked the regional offices to set their own targets, thereby putting the ball was back in their court as to how they would improve their organization.

Waller remarked that the regional offices may want to "low ball" the targets and the state office may have an incentive to "high ball" the targets, and asked how those issues would be resolved. He said there are difficult situations faced by the Devils Lake regional office, for example, assessing whether there is a need for tribal involvement. Waller asked if the regional office would have an opportunity for input in these areas. Schwindt said he would expect that the answer is "yes," the regional office would have the opportunity for input. Waller said he feels there is also a need for cooperation between the state office and the regional offices to address areas that would lead to improvement. Some examples were discussed. Fleming said there was a lot that the state office and regional offices can do together. Schwindt said that the state office knows there are a number of areas that need to be addressed.

Berger said that he believes there is a consensus of the County Social Service Board (CSSB) Directors about the 20%, but it is felt by the Directors that the 20% is county money, and they are protective of those county dollars. He said he feels there is a need to get good buy-in on the use of the 20% county money. Schwindt said that the 75% county share of the incentives will go the counties. The improvement fund may also be used.

Sen. Fischer asked how the Three Affiliated Tribes having their own program will affect the regional offices. Schwindt said it will be the equivalent of working with another state. There was some discussion on how this would affect North Dakota's numbers.

Sen. Fischer said he thinks the cost/benefit measure should be part of the formula. Kramer said that since the other numbers are in percentages, it is very difficult to work them in with the other measures. Schwindt reminded the group that the cost/benefit measure was considered in the 80%; we're only talking about the 20%. He said, however, that the state office will take another look at it to see if there is a way to work in the cost/benefit measure in a way that makes sense.

In response to a question from Vanyo, Schwindt explained that the smaller regions would take a bath if the 75% of county incentives were paid out strictly in accordance with the federal performance measures. In response to a question from Vanyo about why the state office didn't want all of the incentives to go out under a pure federal performance measure method, Schwindt said that there would be nothing to provide an incentive to improve. Vanyo asked whether there wouldn't be a built-in incentive since the federal method is based on performance. Schwindt said there would not be a built-in incentive as money would just come in and go out. Vanyo asked if the distribution of the incentives wouldn't be linked to the regional offices' performance on the measures? Schwindt confirmed that that was true, but only in relation the other regional offices. It would end up being a reward for past performance, not really an incentive to improve.

Schwindt asked that members look at what happens to the smaller regional offices if incentive distribution would occur on a strictly federal performance measure method. The smaller regional offices take a significant hit. Therefore, the counties wanted a phase-in of the formula. Kramer clarified that the phase-in would only apply to the 80% and would be done to cushion the impact on the smaller regional offices.

Davis said he thinks there is a way to add in the cost/benefit measure if that is what the group wants. Schwindt reminded that doing so may make it very complicated.

Berger mentioned the possibility of putting 10% in the improvement account rather than the 5%, then don't deal with the 20%. Kramer said that if all regional offices met the target, all of the incentives would go out. In response to a comment from Traynor, Schwindt said he was looking for improved performance, and that using the federal performance measures hasn't worked in the past. Schwindt also said he will listen to anything that will compel change or improvement. He wants the money to go back out to the regions, but right now, everybody is trying to drive the car. Berger said that the problem is for some regional offices it may be a staffing or money issue, and then more money is taken away. Waller said there has to be some recognition that not everything falls at the feet of the regional office. Delorme said that it seemed to her that at the same time, there should be a technical assistance piece. Schwindt said he thought that was a good idea. He said he asked regional offices to do peer reviews and only three have been done, and those were on small areas.

Sen. Fischer said he thinks it is ok to have targets as long as they are reasonable and take into account various issues across the state.

Traynor asked questions relating to timing issues. The regional office may end up with unearned incentives, but the budget has already been set. When would the unearned incentives not be received? When and how would the regional offices see the loss of incentives?

Sen. Fischer asked about the regional offices being able to come back and get the unearned incentives in the future.

Vanyo said he would still like to work in the cost/benefit measure. Also, he would like to know who would be involved in the establishment of the targets. Schwindt said that establishing the targets would be a collaborative effort.

In response to a question from Griffeth, Schwindt said that measures are usually stated in percentage improvements.

Belford said he thought that part of the reason for doing this was to deal with Tribal issues, so there can be a level playing field. Schwindt said that all Lack of Jurisdiction (LJ) cases are out of the numbers, except for collections. He said, to the extent that the Tribes want to run their own programs, we need to be supportive of that. But, it is the Tribes' choice. Delorme said that in the 1970s, Tribes had to decide how to provide child protective services. Tribes sat down together with the state to determine how to deal with it. Believes need to have these same types of discussions with the Tribes to see who will do what, have a memorandum of understanding, etc.

In response to a question from Belford, Fleming said that LJ is defined as no ability to proceed due to lack of jurisdiction. The case can be at various stages. He provided some examples. Waller said that the Devils Lake regional office wants some recognition that they are doing things in that office that won't be reflected in the performance measures.

Gillette said that with the high unemployment rate on the reservations, getting an order but not being able to collect on it could cause problems. Fleming said that doing so would help on some measures and hurt on others. It wouldn't get on the federal report until the order has been established.

In response to a question from Traynor, Schwindt said that regarding a Tribal child support enforcement program, he thinks the best course of action is to do something like Oklahoma did. State and Tribe sit down and decide who is best to deal with the case, and the other entity closes the case. Delorme said that even in cases where the Tribe does not have their own program, she believes the state and Tribes should sit down and talk. Schwindt said that the state has sat down and talked with each of the Tribes at one time or another.

Schwindt asked that the group go back to discussion on formula. He said he doesn't have a problem seeing if the cost/benefit measure can be worked into the formula. He said he has no problem with having regional offices participate in establishing the targets. The question is – what is reasonable? He believes a phase-in of three years is reasonable. He thinks the 80%/20% split is reasonable, but guesses the jury is still out on that one. If the 80%/20% is fine, then the question boils down to how the 20% goes out. He said there is no intent to take money from the counties. It needs to be used supplement, not supplant, the budget. He asked where are the resolution points? Berger said he can see using the money as a positive such as for a work improvement plan. Schwindt said that would work for him.

Fleming reminded the group about the possibility of accessing the 66% FFP match.

Regarding subsection 4 of the draft rule (regarding withholding incentive funds), Waller asked what would constitute compliance? Fleming said this is more qualitative than quantitative. The communication that would come from DHS would have to include the required steps. Regarding this subsection, Vanyo asked what this would be 20% of? Fleming said that first you would need to determine the amounts payable to the regional office, then it would be 20% of that. Vanyo said that the regional office may say they thought they were being "substantially similar." Fleming said that we won't know today what would be inconsistent a year from now. Schwindt said that nothing can be done in a vacuum. He can't see it being applied willy-nilly. Withholding funds would only be used as a last resort (i.e., a regional office refuses to do something after being directed by the state office). Vanyo said that it comes down to a level of trust of how this vague language in the draft rule would be applied. He feels it could be dangerous to not be more specific. Schwindt asked if there was any suggested language. Vanyo said it should be determined what you are going to look at and then establish a number. Waller asked about changing it so it is about not receiving a service, rather than about level of service. Fleming said that language in this draft rule is no looser than language in other rules.

Belford said there have been a lot of things discussed but that it seem like a consensus has been reached regarding incentive distribution. In response to a question from Davis about the possibility of having something for the next Task Force meeting, Fleming said that will not work as the rule-making process needs to start in December.

Davis said that if we are looking for a decision today, he would like at least one more alternative to be considered. The federal distribution method looks at it in relation to other states. He said that he wouldn't mind giving some of his office's unearned incentives to other regional offices, but not all of the unearned incentives. He likes the idea of bigger regional offices getting a bigger piece of the pie. However, in order to get that, they are held to a higher standard. Davis said in order to add the cost/benefit measure in the mix, may have to look at each of the performance measures separately.

Information was presented regarding the additional alternative Davis mentioned. The incentive distribution would be based upon improvement on each of the measures and upon a size component (e.g., caseload or collections, etc.).

Griffeth said that if the purpose is to provide assistance to those with problems in the five areas, and instead of complicating the matter, what if an additional 5% goes to the state to use the money to assist the regions. He said it sounds like the state has a lot of discretion to determine who needs assistance in certain areas. Davis commented that money is not always the answer. Improvement does not always happen because money is put towards it.

Belford asked if a decision is needed today on the incentives distribution. Schwindt said that a draft rule is needed by the end of November. Belford said this is an opportunity to do this right. Maybe a small group should be established to look at this more closely.

Berger wondered if we were putting the cart before the horse. Is there a possibility that the program will become state-administered? Fleming said even assuming a bill draft would move the program to state-administration, there would still be two years' worth of incentives to distribute.

Schwindt said there is yet another wild card in all of this. The House Ways and Means Committee has cut billions of dollars out of the child support budget. Their amendments would drop the FFP for the program. In addition, incentives would not be eligible for FFP match. In essence, there would be over \$1 million per year in North Dakota that would be shifted back to state and county tax payers. There was a Sense of the Senate passed last week that opposed the cuts. So, this is pending. Davis said this would affect the plan for special projects but not distribution of any incentives.

Schwindt said he didn't need a final decision today about the incentives distribution and proposed that it go back to the Administrators of the regional offices along with Berger, and a couple of other volunteers. This group would look at what the best way is to get the incentives out. At the end of month, we would be in position to say this is what the formula is. This group can consider incorporating the cost/benefit measure. Doing so would make the formula more complicated, but it is not off of the table for consideration.

It was decided that this sub-group would be Berger, Davis, Jacobson, Traynor, and Schwindt. Schwindt said he also expects that all the Administrators of the regional office may be in the room as well. The result of the sub-group's discussion would be sent out to all Task Force members. The meeting of this sub-group was scheduled for Friday, November 18, around 10:00. Schwindt said there is a standing invitation for legislators to participate as well.

Regarding the **CSSB Association response**, a letter was sent by Larry Bernhardt on behalf of the CSSB Directors Association to Carol Olson regarding the draft rule. In essence, Schwindt said that there was objection to the draft rule. Schwindt added that the draft rule will now be going through review and possible revision now anyway. He asked that Berger inform the CSSB Directors Association.

Performance Schwindt disseminated two handouts. One handout includes an email, with attachments, from Rob Cohen dated 10/27/05 regarding the notification that was received in relation to the FFY 2004 "Performance Indicator Scores and Incentives Earned" for all states. North Dakota earned \$1,542,418 in incentives. This is more than the \$1 million that was budgeted. There is also a fact sheet on the FFY 2004 incentives. Essentially, states are cleaning up their act and the amount of incentives they are receiving is increasing.

The second handout is a spreadsheet that provides updated information, by regional office. Schwindt reviewed the changes in each performance measure between FFY 2004 and FFY 2005. Regarding the PEP, the number on the spreadsheet (with a single *) is not the federal measure. The PEP federal measure is reflected on the right side of the sheet (with a double **). Regarding the cost/benefit measure, the final number is not on the spreadsheet but it is \$6.03 collected for every \$1.00 spent. Regarding overall performance ranking, the Dickinson regional office continues to lead. The numbers from this spreadsheet are the FFY 2005 numbers that would be used for incentive distribution.

In response to questions from Traynor, Schwindt said that the incentives number budgeted by regional offices for CY 2006 was \$1 million, based on performance in 2004. Schwindt confirmed that if a regional office improves their performance, the incentives benefit is one or two years later.

Schwindt said he has contacted surrounding states about their FFY 2005 performance measures and he reviewed some of the comparisons.

Schwindt said he had previously mentioned the main two funding points in **pending congressional actions**. There are about 20 provisions. Some of these provisions give state discretion. Some impact the states and some impact the Tribes. There is a provision that would reinstate the 3-year rule requirement for Review and Adjustment in TANF cases; this is something North Dakota is already doing. There is a provision that would reduce the threshold for passport denial. Usage of federal tax intercept would be expanded. There is one provision that could cause some problems. There would be a \$25/year fee for IV-D services for never assistance cases, once \$500 is collected. This would lead to the possibility of people closing their IV-D cases. We may want to look at implementing a charge on nonIV-D cases, like Minnesota does. In response to a question from Delorme, Schwindt said there would be money for Tribes and states to work together.

Centralization projects Information regarding regional offices' discussion about areas for specialization and centralization was previously mailed and is also in the binder.

DHS has moved forward with centralization of the two areas that were presented at the last Task Force meeting: **outgoing interstate** and **asset seizure**. These centralized units would be affiliated with an existing regional office. Requests have gone out to the regional offices regarding requests for proposals for forming and operating each of the centralized units. Fleming briefly reviewed the letters that went out. There is a December 1, 2005, deadline for submittal of proposals with an implementation date of July 1, 2006, to be in effect for 18 months. Regional offices were asked to submit letters of interest or non-interest by November 4, 2005. Four regional offices have expressed interest in the outgoing interstate area and three have expressed interest in the asset seizure area. A handout shows the offices that expressed interest in the respective areas. Notwithstanding SWAP, DHS is committing, through the improvement

fund, the federal match for the operating costs of the centralized unit. This was included in the letter to the regional offices before it was known that the actual incentive funds were higher than projected. Criteria for evaluating submitted proposals will be developed. There are still on-going discussions about other areas: locate and employer related areas (such as income withholding, new hire reporting, and the national medical support notice). The areas of outgoing interstate and asset seizure, however, have moved to the procurement stage.

Schwindt said he knows there is some trepidation about adding funds and he understands that trepidation. The contract for this should be looked at as seed money, and then from then on, it will be up to host counties to manage budgets. It is up to them how they do it. He understands there are concerns with cutting staff, but there are other options, such as reduction through attrition.

Freed asked questions as to how the projected increase in collections was calculated. Schwindt and Hausmann said that it was based on historical data from 2004 and 2005.

Vanyo said he knows there have been several meetings discussing these areas. In looking at those multiple offices that have expressed interest, he is wondering if "baby steps" may be in order. For example, for outgoing interstate, consider going from eight regional offices to four regional offices. Schwindt said that that was not off of the table and that a regional office may want to submit a proposal along with another regional office.

Regarding the locate area, Schwindt mentioned the possibility of private vendors doing some locate activities. Davis has made some contacts on this. Schwindt mentioned the critical importance of locate in what the program does.

Structure of CSE program in other states A chart of the structure of the program in all of the states was previously mailed. Schwindt said this is the definitive structure in each state, as best as we know it. There are three columns: state-administered; county-administered, and combination. A combination state means that the state has some areas in which the program is state-administered and others in which the program is county-administered. This information was put together in response to a request from Vanyo at the last Task Force meeting. Vanyo expressed appreciation for the information. He said he sees that there are more state-administered programs than there are county-administered, but he notes that there is not a clear indication that overall program rankings are any better for those that are state-administered. He said that it is really the people working in the program that make a difference, not the structure. Schwindt said that he agreed that it was the people that make the difference and pointed out that Pennsylvania is state/county-administered while South Dakota is state-administered. Delorme said it would be interesting to see something like this done with how states work with the Tribes in their states.

Sen. Fischer said we need to develop something flexible enough so it can be responsive to the changes. So that changes, for example, can be in administrative rule or policy, rather than statute.

Regarding **alternatives to be considered**, Schwindt said that his problem with how North Dakota's program is structured is that we spend so much time fussing with each other. He said that literally hours of his time each week is spent on problems related to the structure. He guesses that is true at the regional office and county level as well.

Schwindt said that the financing of the program ties to the structure, to a certain extent. This would be impacted if the feds make changes to the program's funding.

Schwindt said he would also like to consider what role, if any, there is for privatization. Traynor asked about available data on performance measures for those states that use private companies. Schwindt said that results vary.

Collaboration with other programs Schwindt said there are some things we know need to be done better, in relation to working with other programs. For example, we have known for years that we have problems with delays relating to our foster care cases. We know there are also issues with Medicaid that we need to work with them on. Schwindt mentioned the "library meetings" which were held in the past in an attempt to address issues. He said to expect a lot of work in the area of collaboration with other programs. Schwindt mentioned the parental employment programs in Dickinson and Grand Forks. Our program is working with the same type of people as the other programs are.

In response to a question from Griffeth, Schwindt said that there is already an interplay between the recreational license system and the program's system. Fleming gave examples of the ways the program interfaces with Game and Fish.

Delorme brought up the possibility of intercepting tribal gaming winnings.

Other items Schwindt asked for confirmation that all members had been reimbursed for expenses related to the last Task Force meeting. He then handed out new request for reimbursement forms.

Next meeting The next meeting of the Task Force was tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, February 1, 2006.

Schwindt said topics for the next meeting will probably include structure, centralization, and incentive distribution.

Gillette said he would be interested in discussing the possibility of a standardized state-wide method of counting cases at the regional office level for distribution of costs among the counties within a region. Schwindt said this will be put on the table.

Freed asked if National Medical Support Notice (NMSN) issues could be discussed. He has concerns about the regional offices not advising customers about options to employment-related insurance, what happens if the withholding cap is reached, etc. Schwindt asked that he be sent an email on any other items for discussion.

Rep. Devlin said that regarding the incentive distribution administrative rule, the bottom line is that DHS needs to set the rule. There is no need for anyone else's agreement.

Adjourned